

Rotarians launched the PolioPlus program to protect children against the disease. Rotary, along with groups such as the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and various governments throughout the world, has achieved a 99 percent reduction in the number of polio cases worldwide.

Their work and generosity has benefited youth, seniors, the impoverished, the disabled, the disheartened, and those devastated by disease, tragedy and natural disaster. I am proud to be a Rotarian and proud of the work that Rotary clubs throughout my district do on an ongoing basis.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me to share with my colleagues the generosity and spirit of service that is exemplified by the members of Rotary. May those of us in the Congress pay special attention to the motto of this organization and conduct ourselves here in a manner of "Service Before Self."

INTRODUCTION OF THE "PREVENTION OF TRAFFICKING OF TSUNAMI ORPHANS ACT"

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 17, 2005

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, today, I, along with Representatives CHARLES RANGEL, CHARLES GONZALEZ, JUANITA MILLENDER-MCDONALD, and ROBERT WEXLER, introduce legislation, the "Prevention of Trafficking of Tsunami Orphans Act," which would authorize critical assistance to the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development to support programs that are being carried out by nongovernmental organizations to protect children who are homeless or orphaned as a result of the Indian Ocean tsunamis in December 2004.

According to the June 2004 Trafficking in Persons Report released by the Department of State, approximately 600,000 to 800,000 men, women, and children are trafficked across international borders each year. Instead of dreams of better jobs and better lives, they are trapped into a nightmare of coercion, violence, and disease. This legislation will help to prevent the children left orphaned or homeless by the Indian Ocean tsunamis from suffering a similar fate.

TRUTH COMMISSION

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 17, 2005

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce legislation calling on the Administration to expose and explain their involvement in Haiti's 33rd coup d'etat.

My legislation will create a TRUTH Commission, which stands for The Responsibility for Uncovering the TRUTH about Haiti. This independent commission will be bipartisan and

work to uncover the Bush Administration's role in Haiti prior to President Aristide's exile.

I believe the Bush Administration undercut the potential for a diplomatic solution for peaceful democratic elections, any potential for a cease-fire and an end to violence.

It bears primary responsibility; therefore, for Aristide's unwilling departure as well as for the sacrifice of the democratic process in Haiti.

As Members of Congress find out more about the events leading up to President Aristide's departure, the twilight activities of his alleged resignation, the current unconstitutional government, and the ongoing turmoil, fear, and misinformation that is still flowing out of Haiti.

We want answers, Mr. Speaker and an independent commission is one of many tools that we intend on exercising.

I have several pressing questions that I hope this commission will find the answers for.

1. Did the U.S. Government impede democracy and contribute to the overthrow of the Aristide government?

2. Under what circumstances did President Jean-Bertrand Aristide resign and what was the role of the United States Government in bringing about his departure?

3. To what extent did the U.S. impede efforts by the international community, particularly the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) countries, to prevent the overthrow of the democratically-elected Government of Haiti?

4. What was the role of the United States in influencing decisions regarding Haiti at the United Nations Security Council and in discussions between Haiti and other countries that were willing to assist in the preservation of the democratically-elected Government of Haiti by sending security forces to Haiti?

5. Was U.S. assistance provided or were U.S. personnel involved in supporting, directly or indirectly, the forces and opposed to the government of President Aristide? Was United States bilateral assistance channeled through nongovernmental organizations that were directly or indirectly associated with political groups actively involved in fomenting hostilities or violence toward the government of President Aristide?

6. Was any U.S. bilateral assistance channeled through nongovernmental organizations that were directly or indirectly involved in fomenting hostilities or violence toward the Aristide government?

And there are more questions about the long-term origins of Haiti's current crisis and the long-term impact on the region as a result of the Administration's policies.

This was regime change by other means.

We do not teach people to violently overthrow our U.S. government, and we must not teach other people in the international community, particularly Haiti, to participate in activities that taint the hope for democracy by use of violence.

I stand here today because the Haitian community stands for democracy and not for political maneuvering by the Bush Administration. This is an issue of democracy.

The United States must stand firm in its support of Democracy and not allow a nascent democracy like Haiti, fall victim to regime change and an international "racist" foreign policy.

I commend all of my colleagues to join in support of this commission and ask for its timely passage.

BLACK HISTORY TRIBUTE TO EDWIN E. SEARCY

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 17, 2005

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, throughout the month of February, I would like to recognize outstanding African Americans of the 2nd Congressional District of Mississippi, and their contribution to Black History. The 23 counties of the 2nd District are well represented from both a local and national perspective.

Americans have recognized black history annually since 1926, first as "Negro History Week" and later as "Black History Month." In fact, black history had barely begun to be studied—or even documented—when the tradition originated. Although blacks have been in America as far back as colonial times, it was not until the 20th century that they gained a presence in our history books.

Though scarcely documented in history books, if at all, the crucial role African Americans have played in the development of our Nation must not be overlooked.

I would like to recognize Edwin E. Searcy, M.D. Family Practitioner of Bolivar County. Dr. Searcy is a member of the hospital staff at Bolivar Medical Center in Cleveland, Mississippi.

Dr. Searcy is a native of Cleveland, MS and received his undergraduate degree from Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee and his medical degree from The University of Mississippi Medical School in Jackson, MS. Dr. Searcy completed a residency in Family Practice at The University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson, MS. He is the son of the late Dr. Rupert T. Searcy and Mrs. E.W. Searcy and has served as a physician for the past twenty-eight years.

Dr. Searcy is a member of the Mississippi State Medical Association Board. He was also selected by the Governor of the State of Mississippi to serve as a member on The State Board of Physical Therapy.

I take great pride in recognizing and paying tribute to this outstanding African American of the 2nd Congressional District of Mississippi who deserves mention, not only in the month of February but year round.

INTRODUCTION OF "THE TORTURE OUTSOURCING PREVENTION ACT"

HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 17, 2005

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Speaker, today I am proud to introduce legislation that would prohibit the outsourcing of torture by the United States Government.

The practice of extraordinary rendition, the extra-judicial transfer of people in U.S. custody

either in this country or abroad to nations known to practice torture, has until recently received little attention due to the secrecy surrounding such transfers. Attention was first drawn to the practice after the case of Maher Arar, a Canadian citizen, first came to light. Mr. Arar was seized in 2002 while in transit to Canada through JFK airport in New York, and was sent to Jordan and later Syria by the U.S. Government. While in Syria, Arar reportedly was tortured and held in a dark, 3-by-6-foot cell for nearly a year. He was ultimately released and detailed his story to the media upon his return to Canada. Since that time, other press reports have identified renditions elsewhere around the world, such as the transfer of an Australian citizen, Mamdouh Habib, from Pakistan to Egypt, where he was reportedly tortured.

Extraordinary rendition is wrong because it: Violates international treaties that the United States has signed and ratified, including most notably Article 3 of the Convention Against Torture, which prohibits sending a person to another state "where there are substantial grounds for believing that he would be in danger of being subjected to torture." Undermines the moral integrity of America in the eyes of the world. Ensures that American captives are likely to be tortured by others out of reciprocity, regardless of the urgency of the pleas of our government or the victim's family.

Although the total numbers of those "rendered" by the Bush Administration are unknown, then-CIA director George Tenet testified to the 9/11 Commission in October 2002 that over 70 people had been subjected to renditions prior September 11. Human rights organizations including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the Center for Constitutional Rights and the ACLU have detailed numerous other cases that may also involve rendition to countries that practice torture. Last year, the Canadian government launched an investigation into Arar's case, but the U.S. State Department has refused to cooperate with the Canadian investigation.

The bill I am introducing today directs the State Department to compile a list of countries that commonly practice torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment during detention and interrogation, and prohibit rendition to any nation on this list. The bill explicitly permits legal, treaty-based extradition, in which suspects have the right to appeal in a U.S. court to block the proposed transfer based on the likelihood that they would be subjected to torture or other inhumane treatment.

Torture is morally repugnant whether we do it or whether we ask another country to do it for us. It is morally wrong whether it is captured on film or whether it goes on behind closed doors unannounced to the American people. President Bush has asserted that "the values of this country are such that torture is not a part of our soul and our being." I agree.

The legislation I am introducing today is designed to ensure that we not only outlaw torture conducted directly by U.S. government personnel, but that we also stop any practice which involves outsourcing or contracting out torture to other nations.

I urge Members to join in cosponsoring this legislation.

INTRODUCTION OF THE "CALLING FOR 211 ACT OF 2005"

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 17, 2005

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud to be the lead Democratic sponsor of the Calling for 211 Act of 2005, and I look forward to working with my congressional partner Rep. BILIRAKIS to move this proposal forward.

Every hour of every day, someone in the United States needs essential services for themselves or someone close to them. These services can range from finding an after-school program for a child, to securing care for an aging parent, to finding drug or alcohol counseling. Faced with a myriad of agencies and help lines, many people end up going without services that they need just because they don't know where to start.

When someone calls 2-1-1, an information and referral specialist assesses the caller's needs and determines which service provider is best equipped to handle their problems or crises. These specialists are also trained to determine whether a caller may be eligible for other programs. 2-1-1 service providers maintain comprehensive databases of resources, including federal, state and local government agencies, community-based organizations and private non-profits.

In 2000, the FCC designated 2-1-1 for community information and referral purposes. Today, 2-1-1 reaches 107 million Americans—about 37 percent of the U.S. population—with call centers operational in 31 states and the District of Columbia. The goal of the Calling for 211 Act of 2005 is to ensure that all Americans have access to quality community information and referral services through 2-1-1.

The largest barriers for communities seeking to implement 2-1-1 are funding and awareness. In many states, limited resources have slowed the process of connecting communities with this vital service. Current funding where 2-1-1 is operational comes from diverse sources including non-profits, state governments, foundations, and businesses.

The Calling for 211 Act is strongly supported by the United Way and builds on the ongoing efforts to make it easier to connect people with important community services and volunteer opportunities through the nationwide implementation of 2-1-1. The legislation provides federal matching grants to enable some dramatic and much needed changes to the way people connect to their communities, including: Providing the infrastructure to connect individuals with precise information and social services that address their needs; Empowering the nation to better respond to large-scale emergencies and homeland security needs by relieving pressure on overwhelmed 911 call centers; Providing aggregated data from 2-1-1 systems nationwide to better assess the needs of our communities.

I believe the 2-1-1 system has great potential; this legislation will establish a federal partnership with states and local communities to

give more Americans access to 2-1-1 services. By augmenting existing funding from state and local governments, nonprofits, and the business community, we can ensure that 2-1-1 can finally be a truly national system. A small investment at the national level would pay immediate dividends in terms of faster, more efficient responses to non-emergency but still critical situations.

In a crisis no one has time to flip through their phonebook. When an urgent medical or safety issue arises, we dial 911 knowing we can get help anywhere and at anytime. We should expect the same when it comes to tracking down important social services as well.

I urge my Colleagues to support this legislation and help to implement this critical safety net for all Americans.

BLACK HISTORY TRIBUTE TO HATTIE J. HITE

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 17, 2005

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Though scarcely documented in history books, if at all, the crucial role African Americans have played in the development of our nation must not be overlooked.

I would like to recognize Mayersville's unsung hero, Mrs. Hattie J. Hite. Known as Ms. Hattie, Hite is 70 years old and the mother of one deceased daughter, Lillian Hite. She is very instrumental in the community and her church family. Every morning, Mr. & Mrs. Hite prepare and deliver breakfast to elderly citizens in the community.

She prepares meals for all of the church functions. Each May, she hosts a memorial program at church honoring her mother, sister and daughter. She invites family, friends, and community members to come over for breakfast. She is and has been a mother figure to the entire community.

I take great pride in recognizing and paying tribute to this outstanding African American of the 2nd Congressional District of Mississippi who deserves mention, not only in the month of February but year round.